

A BRIEF
CONSIDERATION
OF TWO *Mind. 17.*
PASSAGES

IN THE
Bishop of Bangor's Answer
TO THE
COMMITTEE,
ONE ABOUT
The Usefulness of LEARNING,
The other of
*The Magistrate's Business equally to
encourage Men of all Denomina-
tions in Religion.*

By a Gentleman of OXFORD.

Quo non præstantior alter
Protrahere in longum multa damnosa papyro
Dogmata Rixator; discors sibi in omnibus idem.

Audito Davifana.

Mus. Anglic. Vol. I.

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CONSIDERATION
OF TWO
PASSAGES

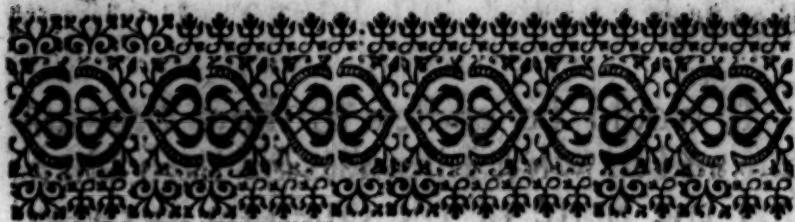
IN THE
Bishop of Bangor's Answer
TO THE
COMMITTEE

ON
The Right of Learning,
The Magistrate's Business equally to
encourage Men of all Denominations in Religion.

By a Gentleman of Oxford.

Two non proprietors after
protestation in longum minus damno capto
Dogmata Rixator; dilectos sibi in omnibus idem.
Antio Episcopus.
Graf. Antio. Vol. I.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Moxley, near Stationers.
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A B R I E F

Confideration, &c.

OF all the Men in the World that ever I knew or heard of, pretending to any Knowledge or Learning in Matters of Divinity, the Bishop of *Bangor* is the Man with whom I would desire to have no Contest or Dispute, not only upon the Account of his great Abilities, and superior Faculty in Reasoning, which are deservedly the Admiration of all his Readers, but also because he seems to delight in making an ill Use of those Faculties, to banter all his Adversaries who write against him, to perplex every thing, and clear up nothing, and to impose upon the Credulity and Under-

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standing of his weak and less intelligent Readers.

It would be endless to shew how often and in what Instances he hath changed the State of the Question between him and Dr. *Snape*, Dr. *Sherlock*, and the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, and diversified it in the Writings of his Jesuit, Mr. *Sykes*, Mr. *Burnet*, and others, whose Explanations of his Doctrine he denied or confirmed as he thought fit; and tho' he prefixed Prefaces to some of their Books, and professed his Approbation of their Principles, yet at the same time he denied that he had ever read those Books before they were published.

And when it was objected to him that his Doctrine opposes and contradicts the Articles of this Church, which he hath subscribed, and declared his solemn Assent and Consent to them three or four times over; and when he is charged with opposing the Royal Supremacy, which he hath sworn to, he only vindicates himself by saying, that he never thought of those Articles when he wrote, and puts his Opponents upon the Proof
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of the Truth of them (which no doubt is very becoming the Character of a Bishop of this Church) and as to the Supremacy of the King, and the Power of the Legislature, he professeth himself not to understand, or to have fully considered either, tho' in the same Page he makes it a Merit to have defended the Rights of the Civil Magistrate in Affairs of Religion, in Opposition to the exorbitant Pretences of Ecclesiastical Persons as well as others.

Tho' these plain and manifest Contradictions may seem strange and extraordinary to low and vulgar Understandings, of which Number his Lordship, out of his great Goodness and Wisdom, with Pity and Disdain represents the *learned* Committee, as he undeservedly calls them of the lower House of Convocation, yet I make no doubt but that his Pen is capable of solving these Difficulties, and reconciling these Contradictions to the entire Satisfaction and Conviction of all his Admirers; for my own part I confess that these are Speculations far above my Capacity to comprehend, and are such Difficulties in the Way of ordinary Readers, as can only be cleared up by his

Lordship's unprecedented and inimitable
Way of Reasoning.

I heartily congratulate his Lordship upon the Success of his Design in perplexing this Dispute with an infinite Variety of inconsistent Notions and Reasonings published by himself and other Persons, and I believe that in the Intricacy and Contradiction it is now involved by that Artifice, it is very difficult to most Understandings to retain the true Meaning and State of the Question; for his Principles are of that particular and extraordinary nature, that they prove whatever he intends or designs; sometimes the Civil Power is exalted above the Ecclesiastical, at other times Acts of Parliament are nothing in Competition with the Divine Authority of the Gospel; sometimes the Church of *Rome* is vilified, and the Interests of the Church of *England* lye nearest his Lordship's Heart; at other times Popery in *Italy* and *Spain*, and Popery in *England* and *Sweden*, are represented to have one and the same malignant Influence upon Religion and the Civil Rights of Mankind; in short, his Lordship seems to keep in reserve to himself

himself, what Religion, or what Form of Church Government he would have prevail in Christendom. For he hath declared by himself and his Friend † the *Jesuit*, that most Protestant Churches retain the most pernicious and rankest Tenets of Popery, and that the Reformation is every where imperfect.

But I leave the troublesome Task of following his Lordship through the Maze of his numberless Contradictions, and dark Explications, to Dr. *Sherlock*, and Mr. *Law*; taking the Liberty to acquaint his Lordship that he is indebted to the World for an Answer to Mr. *Law*'s Second Letter, and that it is expected from him.

The Business of this present Paper, shall be only to consider two Passages of his Lordship's Answer to the Representation of the Committee, which I believe will be thought to deserve a distinct and particular Consideration.

The first Passage is contained in Page 98, 99. which is an entire Paragraph

† *Preface to Pillonniere's Answer*, p. 8.

in the Book, and is Word for Word as follows.

What is called Learning, is so far from being the most necessary, or the most useful Qualification in this Case; i. e. in Men's judging for themselves in Matters of Religion, that there is nothing which hath been seen to administer so many Doubts, and so many Differences as that: nor are any, in Experience, seen to be less secure from Error, than Learned Men. For this, look out into the Popish Countries, and see whether one illiterate honest Man be not as capable of judging for himself in Religion, as all their learned Men united; even supposing them met together in a General Council, with all possible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur: It would be a deplorable Consideration indeed, if the great and important Points of Christianity; those upon which Men's Eternal Salvation depend, could not be judged of without Learning, or were to be determined for Men; not by their own Capacities, but by the Decisions of others called learned Men, who are constantly differing and eternally wrangling with one another.

This Passage expressing so much Contempt of Learning, to enable Men to
judge

judge for themselves in Matters of Religion, is the more surprizing, because his Lordship in the 91 Page, seems to apprehend the Danger of a *consummate Stupidity and Ignorance being happily established*, as he wittily expresseth it, and *universally spread over the whole Land*. And in Page 64, 65. he expresses the same Fear of *Ignorance and Stupidity, both of Teachers and People, of our falling into the most ignominious State of Nature, and being ruined in what is most valuable in Humane Understanding, and Humane Life, i. e. Knowledge*. I can think of nothing but Knowledge, for which Humane Understanding is valuable, or in which Man excells any other Creature. I will venture therefore to affirm, that his Lordship would call it great Carelessness and Forgetfulness, if not Ignorance and Stupidity, in any other Writer, who within the Compass of a few Pages should so manifestly contradict himself: But his Lordship is a renowned Author, and of the first Rank, and therefore not subject to the common Rules of writing and reasoning. But leaving it to his Lordship, if he thinks fit, to reconcile these contradictory Passages of his own Book, I shall particularly

larly examine the several Propositions or Assertions of the Paragraph above cited.

The first Assertion is, that what is called Learning, is far from being the most necessary or the most useful Qualification in this Case, *i. e.* in Men's judging in Matters of Religion, I suppose his Lordship means the Christian Religion.

I assert on the contrary, that nothing is so necessary as Learning to enable Men to judge for themselves in Matters of Religion, whether Natural or Revealed.

His Lordship, I know, is justly an Enemy to implicit Faith and Obedience to any Church, or Society of Men whatsoever; and that too great a Regard to Church Governours, is the High Road to Bigotry and Slavery. *Such a Regard to any Man, his Lordship asserts in the 65 Page, is in its Beginning infamous to all the Faculties we boast of; and in its end is destructive to whole Communities. And we may appeal to Spain, to Italy, to Sweden for Testimonials to it. Page 269. If*
Christians

Christians therefore are not to take their Religion upon Trust, or upon the Foundation of mere Authority, how are they to arrive at the Knowledge and Belief of it? *Why*, saith his Lordship, *they are to have a close and immediate Regard to Christ without Fear of Mans Judgment.* I can't think it improper to ask the Question, whether his Lordship means having a Regard to Christ speaking within them by his Spirit, or without them in the Writings of the Propiets and Apostles? The Expression is odd and singular, but I hope that without Offence we may understand it of the Writings of the New Testament.

But how shall a Christian without some moderate share of Learning be assured or convinc'd, that the Writings of the Apostles are the genuine Works of those Authors whose Names they bear, that they are sincere and incorrupt, and that they are truly translated into the vulgar Languages? Some share of Learning is necessary to make a Man a Judge for himself in the very Principles of Religion, and without such a Judgment, his Lordship rightly observes, Page 67. *that he may be of such a particular Denomination*

nation or Church: but he is not in that Neglect (to inform himself) truly and uniformly a Christian. I would ask his Lordship for what other Reason he employ'd Pillonniere to translate into French Dr. Clark's Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, and of the Truth of the Christian Religion, but to convince and settle Men in the Belief of the Gospel, and by the Help of his excellent Learning, to diffuse that Knowledge and Certainty of Religion which they could not arrive at by the Strength of their own Abilities? And why doth his Lordship so often oblige the World with his accurate Treatises and Compositions; but to clear up some Doubt or Difficulty, to instruct the Ignorant, and to make them more learned? To what End did his Lordship shew his admirable Faculty in Criticism upon a Passage of St. Peter's Epistle, but to convince some of his Welsh Curates, not so learned as himself, that they ought not to lord it over, but to feed, and be Examples to their Flocks?

The Second Proposition in this Paragraph is, that there is nothing which hath been seen to administer so many
Doubts

Doubts and so many Differences as Learning: Nor are any in Experience more secure from Error than learned Men.

One would be tempted to Imagine, that his Lordship was setting himself up for a Patron of Universal Ignorance, if his great Learning did not forbid such a Thought, or that he designed to inculcate the old Maxim, *that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*, if his known Zeal for Protestant Principles could allow it. But I believe his Lordship upon more mature Thought and Deliberation will acknowledge, that nothing hath so much contributed to put an End to Doubts and Differences in Religion, as real and substantial Learning; such as the Knowledge of the History and Transactions of the Ancient Church, the distinguishing of spurious and supposititious Writings of the Fathers from what were sincere and genuine, and by the Help of ancient Manuscripts and Records, restoring the Holy Scriptures to their true and genuine Reading. There is not now a learned Man in the World, as Monsieur *Le Clerc* observes, but is convinced by Bishop *Pearson's* learned

learned Book, concerning the Authority of *Ignatius* his Epistles, which afford an undoubted Testimony and Proof what sort of Government the Apostles constituted in the Christian Church; concerning which Question infinite Volumes had been wrote to no Purpose: And the Question about Justification by Faith or Works, which put not only *Holland*, but other Countries into the greatest Confusion, was beyond all Contradiction clear'd up by Bishop *Bull* in his *Harmonia Apostolica*; and there is hardly any material Point in Divinity which within these Fifty Years hath not been fully discussed by some learned Men, either Protestant or Popish, to the entire Conviction and Satisfaction of learned Men of all Parties: and I dare affirm, that this Church had at this Day been in perfect Peace and Tranquillity, if Learning and Truth had prevailed instead of Ignorance, Faction, and Interest. And indeed, considering the present State of Religion and Church Government in *England*, where Persons of all Sects and Denominations are allowed their full Liberty and Freedom in the Exercise of their Religion; one would admire what could throw this
Church

Church into so great a Confusion and Disorder.

But his Lordship is so kind and condescending as to let us into the Secret of the whole Affair, for he tells us in his Answer, Page 269, *Tho' the Establishment of a Method of Worship, Government, and Discipline, be very good and blameless in it self, yet it would procure, and at last end in, just such a Peace, Stupidity, and Lethargy, as is not only seen, but felt, in too many other Countries. They that will, may call it a Blessing, and magnify the Indolence and Ease they enjoy under it. But others, who look upon the Issue of Things, and have cast up the whole of the Account, and have observed how effectually it hath depopulated Nations, and laid waste flourishing Countries, and destroyed the very Vitals of Civil Sociery, have not doubted to esteem, and call, a Devastation by Goths and Vandals, the greater Blessing of the two.*

I am not so well read as to know the Author of this wise and judicious Remark, but let him be who he will, I know a much greater Author who makes Doubts, Differences, Wranglings,
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and Disputings, an Argument against all Learning; but it is not worth while to insist upon Contradictions, for it is possible that his Lordship may designedly contradict and confute himself to keep his Readers awake, and to try if the Clergy, who too much love their Ease, will take the Pains to observe and find it out; and indeed what pious and charitable Father of a Church would not sometimes by starting a Paradox rouse heavy, dull Mortals from a deep Sleep, and prevent their falling into a Lethargy, which is a Forerunner of Death, and much more to prevent an Evil worse than a Devastation by *Goths* and *Vandals*?

+ And this kind Intimation leads us into the Secret of proroguing the Convocation, that the Debate, as his Lordship expresseth himself in the Preface to his Answer, may be taken from the Bar of Human Authority, and brought to that of Reason and Scripture, *i. e.* that the Clergy may take Pains, and learn to defend the Constitution of the Church by Argument, without relying on the Laws of the Land, which as yet support and maintain it.

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In Confirmation of the Proposition last mentioned, his Lordship is pleased to command his humble Reader in the following Strain. *For this, saith he, look out into the Popish Countries, and see whether one illiterate honest Man be not as capable of judging for himself in Religion, as all their learned Men united, even supposing them met in a general Council, with all possible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur.*

I can't but entirely agree with his Lordship, that if Learning be neither a *necessary* nor a *useful* Qualification in this Case, the most illiterate Person is as capable of judging for himself in Religion as his Lordship, or any other learned Man, or as all the learned Men in the World united; and I believe no Body is of Opinion that all the possible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur, such as Scarlet Robes and Elbow Chairs, can add any ⁺ Weight to their Judgment.

But I can't comprehend why his Lordship should confine this Observation to any particular Country, as he doth, by saying, *for this* (by which I suppose he means a Proof of the foregoing Assertion)

tion) *look out into the Popish Countries* : why might not he, if he had pleased, have said, look out into all Countries, whether Protestant or Popish, and see whether one illiterate honest Man, &c? the Sense would have been equally good, and much more to his Lordship's Purpose in the present Juncture ; for if Learning be neither necessary nor useful to enable Men to judge of Religion, it is equally unnecessary and useless to Protestants and Papists , and learned Men ought not to be suffered to meddle with it in any Country whatsoever, more than Persons the most illiterate : for every illiterate honest Man in that respect is as competent a Judge, as a truly general Council lawfully called.

I might now congratulate his Lordship upon his rare Invention of finding out a Method of procuring Peace to this Church, and to all Christendom, and of silencing for ever all Cavils and Disputes about Religion. We have been long seeking for an infallible Judge, and we have now found him out by his Lordship's kind Assistance. With his Leave therefore I command and ordain in his Name, that no more Books be wrote

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Or published upon this, or any other Subject of Religion ; for the Bishop of Bangor, tho' according to his Principles no more a proper and a competent Judge than the most ignorant Person in the World, hath asserted and proved, even to a Demonstration, in Page 97, *That the Illiterate and Ignorant, as they are called, have as much Right, and are as much obliged to judge for themselves in the Matter of Religion ; as the greatest Scholars, and the most knowing in what the World calls Learning. Whatever Capacity they have, it is their own, and given by God to guide them ; as other Mens Capacities are to guide those others : And God expects nothing from them but what is proportionable to their own Capacities.*

Far be it from me to endeavour to lessen the Force of this Reasoning, and may it always be received as a self-evident Truth, without Contradiction ; I am only concerned that his Lordship did not make this happy Discovery sooner, for by this *Nostrum* he might have saved himself and other People no small Trouble.

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But lest this Proof, brought to confirm every illiterate honest Man in the Seat of Judgment, should not be thought sufficient, his Lordship is pleased to add further: *It would be a deplorable Consideration indeed, if the great and important* x *Points of Christianity; those upon which Mens Eternal Salvation depend, or depends; could not be judged of without Learning: or were to be determined for Men, not by their own Capacities, but by the Decisions of others, called learned Men, who are constantly differing and eternally wrangling with one another.*

His Lordship is very tender and compassionate to the miserable State of the Members of this Church, who live with their Minds and Consciences enslaved to the arbitrary Decisions of learned Men; and it is pity that his good Intentions should by any means be frustrated; but I am afraid lest some envious and ill-natur'd Persons should object to this Scheme, that instead of *leading Men to Christian Truth and Christian Peace, it will lead them into perplexed Mazes of infinite Human Variety and unbounded Human Fancy, that it will dissolve all Harmony*
and

and Society among Christians, and all visible Communion and external Worship, and make as many Churches as Christians, all *differing from, and eternally wrangling with one another*; I fear they may proceed so far as to affirm, that this Scheme of his Lordship's is a Snare of Human Artifice, composed of Words without Meaning, and Power without Right, and Outside without Sincerity; I wish that they don't upon this Occasion attack his Lordship in his strong Hold and surest Retreat, even the Point of the Reformation, by telling him, that if Ignorance and Learning have been always upon an equal foot, and that if God required no more of the most illiterate or mean Capacity than he was capable of, without any Obligation on the more learned to instruct and improve him, *neither the Gospel, nor the Reformation, nor the Church of England, could have had one single Votary in the World*; for Ignorance was the very Essence of Popery, and Learning the very Essence of Protestantism; and the Foundation of the Reformation, and of the Church of England. I shall pursue this Subject no further, but only wish his Lordship good Success in his new Invention,

The other Passage in his Lordship's Book which I shall make some Observation upon, is contained in the 155th Page, and is as follows:

That it is the Business of the Magistrate, with respect to Religion, to see that Men worship God according to their own Consciences, every sort, in their several infinitely various Ways; and that this may be done more effectually, to encourage them all equally, of what Denomination soever, without laying any Penalty, or even the least Incapacity on the Account of any of those Points, in which it is plain their Reason permits them to differ.

I suppose his Lordship means by his saying, *that it is the Business of the Magistrate, that it is his Duty, to see that Men worship God according to their own Consciences, every sort in their several infinitely various Ways.* If this be the Magistrate's Duty, I will engage that the Magistrate shall never want Business.

And is a Christian Magistrate to take care that Men of all Sects and Denominations in Religion, Jews, Pagans, and
Ido:

Idolaters, Papists, and all who call themselves Protestants, tho' they are no Christians, *worship God according to their own Consciences, every sort in their several infinitely various Ways?* His Lordship seems to have designed to comprehend all those I have mentioned, as well as all other different Sects who may ever arise, by that large Expressi-
on, in their several infinitely various Ways; and I am the more inclined to believe that this is his Meaning, because in Page 288 he saith, *the Argument of the Inquisition holds equally good in all Instances of a like sort, in whatever Degree, tho' never so distant, they approach to it.*

If this Assertion of his Lordship's be founded on good Reasons, our Constitution is very imperfect, and no doubt all Persons concerned will lay Claim to this noble Privilege, and without Delay apply themselves to the Legislative Power, in order to be restored to the indisputable Rights and essential Liberties of Human Nature; for any the least Restriction of any one Sect in any Instance, approaches to the Injustice and Violence of an *Inquisition*.

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And that this is his Lordship's true Meaning, appears more plainly by his declaring that it is not only the Business of the Magistrate to see this performed, but that this may be done more effectually, it is his Business to encourage them all equally of what Denomination soever, without laying any Penalty, or even the least Incapacity on the Account of any of those Points, in which it is plain, the Reason of Mankind permits them to differ. I have not the least Intention to dispute with his Lordship upon this or any other of his incontestable Principles. It is a Matter of too great Consequence and Importance for any private Person to give his Judgment upon. But this Assertion seems highly to reflect upon the Conduct and Government of all Christian Princes and States all the World over, who act in a downright Contradiction and open Violation of this first Principle of Justice, and Rule of right Reason; and I believe that his Lordship's great reading will not furnish him with any one Instance of any one Prince or State in *Europe*, either of this, or former Ages, who gave equal Encouragement to Persons
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of all Sects and Denominations in Religion.

I have one Scruple against the intrinsic Goodness of this charitable Proposal for the universal Ease and Benefit of Mankind, which I should not venture to publish, if it did not arise from a Passage in his Lordship's incomparable Writings. In Page 228 of his Answer, he saith, *My Doctrine was*, I hope his Lordship knows that it is still the same, *that no Temporal Rewards can attend upon Virtue and Charity, considered as Religion. And this Doctrine was touched in the following Argument.* If Religion amongst Christians be Virtue and Charity, practised by inward Faith relating to a Future State; then to propose the Rewards of this World to Religion; as such, is contrary to its true Interests. And the Reason is plain, as his Lordship very judiciously observes. Because you will either propose a Reward for something which is not Religion; or for an outward Practice which you cannot judge to be Religion, not knowing the Principle within, and will too probably encourage Hypocrisy instead of Religion, by promulgating Rewards for such and such Professions or outward Practices?

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According to this Doctrine therefore, which his Lordship acknowledgeth was once his own; and according to the reasoning by which he confirms this Doctrine, if it be the Business or Duty of the Magistrate to give equal Encouragement to Persons of all Religions, without laying the least Penalty or Incapacity on any one of them, it would follow, that the Magistrate would tempt all Men to be equally Hypocrites. I can't but think that it would much better answer his Lordship's charitable Design of making Men sincere in their Religion, to give no Encouragement to Men of any Sect or Profession whatsoever, but to bestow all Temporal Rewards and Encouragements upon Men of no Religion; and this Method without Doubt would separate the Wicked from the Good, the most pretending and formal Hypocrite from real and sincere Christians.

And I am still the more confirmed in the same Sentiment, because his Lordship in Page 233 of his Answer affirms, *That the Civil Magistrate hath it not in his Office as such, or in his Power*

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to promote true Piety by Temporal Sanctions, because it ceaseth to be true Piety in the Sense of the Christian Religion, if it be procured by Worldly Motives; and his Lordship is pleased to give the most undeniable Proof of the Truth of this Argument, by the most sensible and evident Demonstration that can be thought of, which we find in Page 220, where he shews the Absurdity of arguing from a lesser thing being a part of the greater, that therefore the greater may be a part of the less: and from an House containing a Cabinet, that therefore a Cabinet may contain an House.

With his Lordship's Leave therefore, for these Reasons so forcibly and learnedly urged by himself, I presume to declare, that it is not the Business or Duty of the Magistrate equally to encourage Men of all Denominations in Religion, without laying the least Penalty or Incapacity on any one of them: but that the Magistrate would act more prudently and justly to give equal Discouragement to all, by such Penalties and Incapacities as he shall think fit, that he may take Men off

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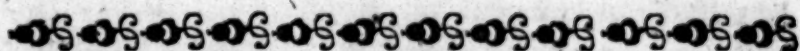
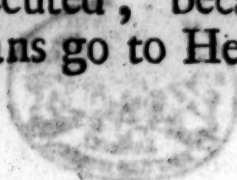
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from the Love of the Things of this World, which debase and corrupt their Minds, and make them in Shew and Profession what they are not in Reality and Truth, and fix them upon *unforced and disinterested Faith in God and a future State*; for I perceive that his Lordship with great reason apprehends the Power and Prevalency of Worldly Motives and Considerations to corrupt and debauch Mens Minds; and I should rejoyce with his Lordship to see that all the good Church-Men of the Right Honourable the House of Lords, and the Honourable the House of Commons, would upon the Principles of Christian Mortification and Self-denial give up all their Honours, Profits, and Employments, and for ever renounce them, as dangerous Snares and Temptations, and leave the Honours and Employments of the State to be possessed and enjoyed by the Dissenters and the Foreigners; and I am well assured that when this Project is happily executed, it will make Men as sincere in their Loyalty as in their Religion; for *Julian* the Apostate, long before his Lordship,

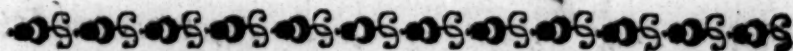
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observed, that it is a Benefit and Advantage for the Church to be distressed and persecuted, because by that means Christians go to Heaven.



F I N I S.



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means Christians go to Heaven.



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